

## Worksheet Question 2

1. Identify the major learning goals for your activity
2. Questions to ask:
  - What do you want VR counselors to know or do after this teaching activity?
  - Does it involve addressing knowledge, attitude, skills, or practice, or some combination of those?

Once you have a general topic, it is useful to write down specific learning goals. What do you want participants to learn? What do you want them to know, or be able to do, that they did not know or could not do when they arrived? Setting learning goals at the start helps you stay focused as you plan. When you teach, sharing the goals also helps learners know what to expect and understand why each part of what you are sharing is important.

For example, for this training, our goals are as follows:

Identify the principles of adult learning.

Propose ways to incorporate adult learning principles into teaching VR counselors about research-based practices for clients with autism spectrum disorder or students with disabilities.

You can see we are doing that: We presented the learning principles at the start and now are trying them out.

Your learning goals depend on what you need to teach and what your audience needs. It could be very simple: being able to show that our learners understand how to use adult learning principles as they teach their VR counselors. If knowledge is the goal, it could be a set of goals to learn different types of information. Alternatively, you might want to have people identify why a new skill is important, learn the steps of learning that skill, and then practice that skill.

Think about the different ways of approaching of adult learning: knowledge, attitude, skills, and practice. Does your audience need all of these (or just one or two) to reach your learning goals? Does what you want to teach have a single goal or several goals that are interrelated? Finally, think about what you want to have happen when the VR counselors leave the room. What should they be able to tell someone else what they learned?

It is important to note that when we say “attitude,” we need to respect where learners are coming from. You might need to introduce a new policy or practice, and your audience might be skeptical. They might have good reason to think that a new policy will make their work harder or more time-consuming, for example. You might want to improve their attitude about the policy, but telling adult learners that you will change their attitude is rarely a good idea. You can imagine it might not go well. Instead, if attitude is the goal, you might want to focus on identifying what is in it for them: How will this new policy, skill, or procedure align with what they think is important, solve a problem they have, or help their clients? You also might want to identify barriers in advance or make part of the training a session of identifying the barriers as a group and coming up with ways to make the new policy fit better with their work environments. This goes back to a key point about adult learning: respecting adult learners as goal and relevancy oriented.

For my example, I will assume that on-the-job social skills coaching is something that VR counselors are not currently doing. I know they work with clients on other job skills, such as showing up on time and asking questions. I know they are busy and do not have a lot of time with each client. I also know they are focused on making sure that employers feel as if the clients are fitting in at the work site and feel confident in the work environment. Therefore, my overall goals might be as follows:

Describe how on-the-job social skills training can help people with autism spectrum disorder have a better workplace experience.

Outline the major elements of social skills training.

Practice social skills training.

Thinking this through helps me figure out how best to present the topic in a way that aligns with how they see their job (attitude), what information they need (knowledge), and what they need to practice to adopt this new approach (skills).

Take a minute or two and think about your goals for teaching. You can adjust them later but think about how to break down your topic into discrete goals.